

Be Imitators of Christ

6th Week of Ordinary Time – Mark 1:40-45

St. Paul's challenge this week, **"Be imitators of me, as I am of Christ"**, is the challenge that stands before us as we begin the Lenten season this coming Wednesday. We are called to **"do everything for the glory of God."** In doing so, St. Paul reminds us that our actions are not done to benefit ourselves, but we strive to do all things for the benefit of the many. We are called to do our best in order to further the good, enhancing the well-being of others.

Both the first reading and the gospel speak of what must be done in order that we can fulfill the challenge of Lent. We are called to be clean. In other words, we are called to take a good long look at our life, our personal and professional relationships, assessing the things that must be healed by the power of Christ.

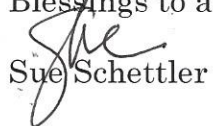
When was the last time you went to confession? I know this is still not a popular sacrament. Why? I believe that it calls for true honesty with our self. We must scrutinize the leading edges or the dark places of our hearts. We must find **"the sore of leprosy"** that has cut us off from the rest of the community. And then we must acknowledge that to Christ through the sacramental sign of our priest. This is tough stuff. Making a true examination of our life is one of the most difficult things we do as human beings. It is all too easy to look at the wrong done by others and then say.... Hey, I'm much better than that person.

The truth is that all of us have some form of leprosy that eats away at the fiber of our soul. It might be gossip. It could be a general disregard for the needs of others. Perhaps, you see no need in ever apologizing or forgiving. There may be deeply embedded addictions. One of the greatest illnesses that plague us these days is a lack of gratitude to God for all the blessings we have been given. It is all too easy to believe that all that we have, including family, home and lifestyle, are all due to our own abilities and clever intelligence. We fail to see the Divine source of our gifts. We fail to give thanks.

The leper in today's gospel proclaims to Jesus, **"If you wish, you can make me clean."** The leper recognized Jesus' Divine source of goodness and came seeking his healing. **"Moved with pity he (Jesus) stretched out his hand, touched him, and said to him, I do will it. Be made clean."** In being made clean, the man could return to his place in the wider community.

This Lent let us all take up the challenge made to us this week by St. Paul. We are called to be imitators of Christ, bringing goodness and holiness to all that we do. To prepare for the celebration of Easter, renewing our lives this Lent, I invite you to consider celebrating the sacrament of reconciliation. Take time to look deeply into your life and find the good. Then take time to confess those things you will leave behind. Seek the saving and healing power of Christ this Lenten season.

Blessings to all!


Sue Schettler